

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 INR-05 NSAE-00 PA-01 RSC-01

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FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4888

UNCLAS LONDON 13591

PASS AGRICULTURE

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAGR,UK

SUBJECT: RESIGNATION OF UK MINISTER OF STATE FOR
AGRICULTURE

BEGIN SUMMARY: MR. NORMAN BUCHAN, MINISTER OF STATE AT
THE UK MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, RESIGNED THAT POSITION ON
OCTOBER 17. MR. BUCHAN WAS NUMBER TWO AT THE MINISTRY TO
MR. FRED PEART; THE POST DID NOT HAVE CABINET STATUS.
END SUMMARY.

1. ON OCTOBER 17, 1974 MR. NORMAN BUCHAN, MINISTER
OF STATE AT THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, AND NUMBER TWO
TO THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, MR. FRED PEART, RESIGNED
HIS POSITION. HIS LETTER OF RESIGNATION HAS NOT BEEN
PUBLISHED BUT IN A STATEMENT AFTERWARDS, MR. BUCHAN SAID
HE HAD TAKEN THE STEP BECAUSE OF "INCREASINGLY SERIOUS
DISAGREEMENTS ABOUT CERTAIN POLICY MATTERS AND ABOUT THE
CONTROL AND DIRECTION OF THE DEPARTMENT."

2. THE STATED REASON FOR THE RESIGNATION APPEARS TO
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CENTRE ON A DIFFERENCE OF OPINION WITH THE MINISTER ON

THE SEPARATION FROM THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE OF MATTERS CONCERNING FOOD PRICES AND FOOD PRICING CONTROL WHICH FOLLOWING LAST FEBRUARY'S GENERAL ELECTION WERE MADE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF PRICES AND CONSUMER PROTECTION UNDER MRS. SHIRLEY WILLIAMS.

3. BEHIND MR. BUCHAN'S STATED REASON FOR RESIGNATION, HOWEVER, THERE APPEARS TO BE A DEEP-SEATED DIFFERENCE OF OPINION OVER THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE'S ROLE IN THE UK'S RENEGOTIATION POLICY ON BRITISH MEMBERSHIP OF THE EC MR. BUCHAN IS ON THE LEFT WING OF THE LABOUR PARTY AND A LONG-STANDING OPPONENT OF BRITISH MEMBERSHIP OF THE

COMMUNITY. HE IS SAID TO HAVE BECOME INCREASINGLY UNHAPPY AT THE CONCILIATORY POSITION OF MR. PEART ON RENEGOTIATION; PEART'S ATTITUDE SINCE LAST FEBRUARY'S ELECTION HAS SHIFTED AWAY FROM HIS PREVIOUS HOSTILITY TOWARDS THE CAP AND TO BRITISH COMMUNITY MEMBERSHIP.

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